The Australian
Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6100

Rosenthal, Doreen Anne

(1938 -)

Born	19380101, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Feminist, Professor, Psychologist

Summary

Doreen Rosenthal is a national and international leader in research on adolescent development. This led to innovative and sustained research on adolescent sexuality and sexual health at a time when the HIV/AIDS epidemic had become a significant problem for public health. She served as a member of the Committee for Gender Studies at the University of Melbourne from 1986. She was made an Officer of the Order of Australia , is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and is on the Victorian Honour Roll of Women. Doreen is an Honorary Life Member, Victorian AIDS Council.

Details

Doreen Rosenthal was born in Melbourne in 1938 into a family of European origin. Her grandparents, all born in Russia, immigrated to Australia in the mid 1920s, with their children. Her mother, Judith, once married, maintained a traditional role of homemaker and her father was a manufacturer then retailer of women's clothing. One of three daughters, Doreen attended Elwood Central School where she was School Captain and House Captain in her final year. From 1952-55, she attended MacRobertson Girls' High School, then as now a selective girls only high school. She matriculated in 1955 having been Prefect and House Captain in her final year. After withdrawing from Pharmacy College, she worked as a receptionist until her marriage in 1958 to Jon David Rosenthal. Her three children, Mark, Simon and Joanna, were born before she commenced a Diploma of Social Studies at the University of Melbourne. After one year, her interest in psychology led her to switch to an Honours Degree in that subject. She graduated in 1972 with a First Class Honours Degree, winning the Dwight Prizes for First Place in Arts (Psychology).

Following completion of her PhD in 1975, she began as a lecturer at Melbourne State College. In 1980 she returned as an academic to the Psychology Department at Melbourne University where she became a Reader in Psychology. During this time she was a member of the newly formed Committee for Gender Studies, a group of women academics from may disciplines that supported and encouraged equal opportunity policies and practices within the university. Doreen was also founding President of the Association of Women on Campus at the University of Melbourne, formed to provide women with a formal voice within the institution. She became Founding Professor and Director of a new VicHealth funded Centre for the Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, now the Australian research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS). The Centre became pre-eminent in multidisciplinary social research, focusing on HIV prevention and education, with significant funding from the Federal Health Department. During her time there, she encouraged the inclusion of gender issues in Centre research and its dissemination. After several years as Associate Dean (Research), in the Faculty of Health Sciences at La Trobe University, Doreen took a five-year post as Professor of Women's Health at the University of Melbourne as Director of the Key Centre for Women's health in Society that had become part of the new School of Population Health. In both Centres a key focus was on ensuring that research outcomes were included in policy and practice agendas wherever possible.

In 2008, following her retirement, Doreen was made Professor Emerita in the School of Population Health. Since retiring she has co-written four books, three of these focusing on women's roles in later life – as grandmothers (New Age Nanas: Being a Grandmother in the 21st Century: Grandparenting: Contemporary Perspectives), and as retirees (Women in Retirement: Challenges of a new Life Stage).

Doreen has been a member of key national and state advisory committees that provide policy advice to relevant ministers. She was a Deputy Chairperson of the Australian National Council on AIDS, Chairperson of the Council's Education and Prevention Sub-Committee and a member of the Australian Health Ethics Committee. In Victoria she was a member of the Victorian Ministerial Advisory Committee on AIDS and Deputy Chairman of its Education Working Group. In these roles she played an active part in helping to shape Australia's HIV/AIDS policies, in particular, those policies focussed on prevention education.

Author Details
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